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ASCS *Copy 8*  
Background  
Information

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CONSERVATION/  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION PROGRAMS

BI No. 5

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Agricultural  
Stabilization and  
Conservation  
Service

August 1987

AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Purpose  
of ACP

The Agricultural Conservation Program (ACP) is a joint effort by agricultural producers, Federal and State agencies, and other groups to restore and protect the Nation's land and water resources and preserve the environment.

ACP provides cost-sharing with farmers and ranchers in carrying out conservation and environmental protection practices on agricultural land that result in long-term public benefits.

ACP is designed to: help prevent soil erosion and water pollution; protect and improve productive farm and ranch land; conserve water used in agriculture; preserve and develop wildlife habitat; and encourage energy conservation measures.

Practices that are primarily production oriented or that result in significant economic benefits to the farmer and rancher are not eligible for ACP cost-sharing.

Scope of  
Program

ACP is national in scope, and is available for participation by all farmers and ranchers who establish the need for cost-share assistance in solving resource conservation and agricultural pollution problems.

The practices approved for cost-sharing must result in long-term and community-wide benefits, and must be practices that the farmer or rancher would not, or could not, be expected to undertake without financial and technical assistance. Annual, short-term, and long-term contracting arrangements are available.

Legislative  
Authority

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ACP is authorized in sections 7 to 15, 16 (a) and 17 of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act, approved February 29, 1936, as amended and supplemented by Title X of the Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973. The program's goals and authorities were updated by the Food and Agriculture Act of 1977, and were further modified under the Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for fiscal year 1979 and section 259 of the Energy Security Act of 1980. Funds for the program are provided annually through the regular appropriation process.

Program  
Adminis-  
tration

ACP is administered by Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation (ASC) State and county committees, working under the general direction of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. ASCS State and county offices serve as focal points for the administration of ACP. The Soil Conservation Service (SCS), the Forest Service (FS), and State forestry agencies are responsible for providing technical program guidance to ASC committees as well as technical assistance to farmers in carrying out conservation practices. The county Cooperative Extension Service provides educational support.

To assure that the program provides effective solutions to local conservation problems, county ASC committees periodically meet with county program development groups to identify the problems and develop conservation practices designed to solve them. These practices are included by ASC county committees in the county agricultural conservation programs.

County ASC committees work with farmers and ranchers to encourage their adoption of the most needed practices and assign priorities to designated practices.

State ASC committees review and approve county programs which must also be approved by the Secretary of Agriculture before they are implemented.

ACP funds are authorized annually by Congress. The Secretary of Agriculture determines how much each State receives based on the State's soil and water conservation needs. The funds are distributed through State committees to county committees which allocate funds to farmers and ranchers.

Cost-sharing is available under annual agreements or long-term agreements. Requests for long-term agreements can be accepted for complete farms for a period of three to ten years, or for a portion of a farm for a period of three to five years. The maximum cost-share limitation for the annual program is \$3,500 per person. (A person is defined as an individual, group partnership, corporation, or other legal entity owning or operating a farm or ranch.) However, lump sum payments in excess of \$3,500 are authorized for a component if a long-term agreement is completed in one year.

The Federal Government may share up to 75 percent of the cost to install practices under annual agreements (or at a higher rate if authorized by the Secretary of Agriculture). The Federal share of the cost depends on the public benefits resulting from the conservation or pollution abatement practice.

Producers must agree to maintain practices for a specified number of years. Producers who fail to do so are required to refund all or part of the Federal funds provided for installation of the practice.

Farmers or ranchers may enter into pooling agreements to jointly solve mutual conservation problems.

Program  
Partici-  
pation

To participate, a farmer files a request with the ASC county committee (at the ASCS county office) for ACP cost-sharing. An ACP practice must be approved before the practice is started.

The county committee notifies the applicant by letter that the request for cost-sharing has been approved subject to a determination by SCS, on certain practices, that the practice is feasible. For long-term agreements, a conservation plan must be developed by a representative of SCS and approved by the Soil and Water Conservation District before final approval by the county ASC committee can be obtained.

After the practice is completed, the farmer certifies to the county office that all installation specifications, technical standards, and any State or local applicable regulations have been met. The farmer pays the total cost of establishing the approved practices and is then reimbursed for the government's share of the cost.

Eligible  
Practices

Among practices eligible for cost-sharing assistance under ACP are establishment or improvement of permanent vegetative cover, contour or strip-cropping systems, and terrace systems; development of springs, seeps and wells; installation of pipelines, storage facilities, and other measures intended to provide erosion control on range or pastureland; installation of water impoundment reservoirs for erosion control, conservation, and environmental and wildlife enhancement; planting trees and shrubs and improving timber stands for protection against wind and water erosion and to protect trees for timber production; and development of new or rehabilitation of existing shallow water areas to support food, habitat and cover for wildlife.

For other practices that are or may be available for ACP cost-sharing assistance, agricultural landowners and operators should contact their local ASCS county office.



## CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM

Legislative Authority	The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is authorized in sections 1201 through 1245, subtitles A through E, Title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985.
Purpose	The Conservation Reserve Program encourages farmers, through 10-year contracts with USDA, to stop growing crops on highly erodible cropland and plant it to a protective cover of grass or trees. Nationwide, CRP has the potential of removing as many as 40-45 million acres of highly erodible land from cultivation for a decade or more.
Program Administration	CRP is administered by the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service in cooperation with the Soil Conservation Service, Extension Service, State forestry agencies and local soil and water conservation districts. ASCS State and county offices serve as focal points for program administration.
Rental Payments on Bid Basis	<p>Annual rental payments of up to \$50,000 per year will be made to farm owners or operators who enter into a contract to convert eligible land to permanent vegetative cover. Payment will be made in cash or in negotiable commodity certificates redeemable for cash or in commodities owned by the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC). Rental payments are not counted against the payment limitation applicable to commodity price support and production adjustment programs.</p> <p>Applications for program participation are made to ASCS county offices. At the time of application, producers submit bids stating the annual rental payment per acre they would accept to convert their highly erodible cropland to permanent vegetative cover.</p>
Cost-Sharing for Conversion	In addition to the rental payment, CCC will pay up to 50 percent of the cost of establishing permanent vegetative cover. The cover must be established by the end of the next growing season following contract approval. Eligible practices are Permanent Tame Specie Cover Establishment, Permanent Native Specie Cover Establishment, Forest Tree Plantations, Permanent Wildlife Habitat, Field Windbreak Establishment, and Shallow Water Areas for Wildlife.
Erodibility Standards	Eligibility is limited to highly erodible cropland. To be considered "highly erodible," cropland must meet either of two criteria: (1) it must have both an erodibility index equal to or greater than eight for either wind or water erosion, and an erosion rate greater than that recommended by Soil Conservation Service technical standards, or (2) the land must be eroding at either three times the soil loss tolerance, or two times the soil loss tolerance where serious gully erosion exists. The soil loss tolerance is the maximum level of annual soil erosion that will permit a high level of crop production to be sustained.

The erodibility index is a measure of the soil's inherent potential to erode based on soil type, slope of the land, rainfall and wind exposure. The erosion rate is then calculated based on cover and management practices that were on the land during the period 1981-85.

Two-thirds or more of a field must be considered highly erodible. Also, the land must have been used to produce an agricultural commodity (other than orchards, vineyards, or ornamental plantings) in any two of the five years from 1981 to 1985. Land is considered to have produced a crop if it was tilled and planted, devoted to alfalfa or other multiyear grasses and legumes in rotation with an annual crop, or if it was set aside under a production adjustment program. However, land designated as set-aside or diverted acres in a current production adjustment program is not eligible for CRP.

Conservation Plan	A conservation plan describing the conservation measures and maintenance to be carried out by the owner or operator during the 10-year term of the contract must be approved by the local conservation district for the offered acreage.
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Producers who elect to return the land to production before the end of the contract period must repay to CCC, with interest, all payments received for annual rental and for establishing cover.

Planting History Protected	Bases, quotas, and allotments will be reduced over the life of the contract by the ratio between the total cropland on the farm and acreage placed in the CRP. However, producers will choose how reductions are to be made, and the acreage's planting history will be preserved.
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#### OTHER CONSERVATION PROVISIONS OF THE 1985 FOOD SECURITY ACT

Conservation Compliance Provision	The conservation compliance provision discourages the continued production of crops on highly erodible cropland where the land is not carefully protected from soil erosion. If crops are produced on such fields without a locally approved conservation plan, producers may lose eligibility for certain USDA program benefits. Conservation compliance applies to land where annually tilled crops were grown at least once during the period 1981-85, and will apply to all highly erodible land in annual crop production by 1990.
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Land is considered highly erodible if potential erosion is more than eight times the rate at which the soil can maintain continued productivity. One-third or more of a field must be considered highly erodible, or the highly erodible area must be at least 50 acres.

Producers have until January 1, 1990, to develop and begin actively applying a conservation plan on highly erodible cropland. The plan must be fully operational by January 1, 1995. All plans are approved by local conservation districts.

Sodbuster  
Provision

The sodbuster provision discourages the conversion of highly erodible land for agricultural production. If highly erodible grassland or woodland is used for cropland production, producers may lose eligibility for several USDA program benefits. Sodbuster applies to highly erodible land which was not planted to annually tilled crops from 1981-85.

Erodibility standards are the same as for the conservation compliance provision (an erodibility index of greater than eight). However, sodbuster was effective December 23, 1985, the date the Food Security Act was signed. To maintain eligibility for USDA program benefits, producers must have a conservation plan approved by their local conservation district for any highly erodible land broken out for crop production after that date.

Swampbuster  
Provision

The swampbuster provision discourages the conversion of natural wetlands to cropland use. With some exceptions, if producers convert a wetland area to cropland after December 23, 1985, they may lose eligibility for several USDA program benefits. Exceptions to the swampbuster provision include: conversions which began before December 23, 1985; conversions of wetlands that had been created artificially; crop production on wetlands that became dry through drought, and conversions which SCS has determined have minimal effect on wetland values.

USDA  
Programs  
Affected

Producers who fail to comply with the conservation compliance, sodbuster and swampbuster provisions risk losing eligibility for: price and income supports, crop insurance, Farmers Home Administration loans, CCC storage payments, farm storage facility loans, Conservation Reserve Program annual payments, and other programs under which USDA makes commodity-related payments.

Loss of program benefits applies not just to the highly erodible or converted wetland acreage, but to all the land farmed. To regain eligibility for program benefits, producers must produce their next crop under an approved conservation system for highly erodible land, and must not produce crops on converted wetland areas.

#### EMERGENCY CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Purpose  
of ECP

The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) provides emergency funds for sharing with farmers and ranchers the cost of rehabilitating farmland damaged by wind erosion, floods, hurricanes, or other natural disasters, and for carrying out emergency water conservation measures during periods of severe drought.



The natural disaster must create new conservation problems, which, if not treated, would: (1) impair or endanger the land; (2) materially affect the productive capacity of the land; (3) represent unusual damage which, except for wind erosion, is not the type likely to recur frequently in the same area; and (4) be so costly to repair that Federal assistance is or will be required to return the land to productive agricultural use. Conservation problems existing prior to the disaster involved are not eligible for cost-sharing assistance. ECP is administered by ASC State and county committees.

Legislative Authority      The Emergency Conservation Program was established by the Agricultural Credit Act of 1978, Public Law 95-334, Title IV, 16 U.S.C. 2201. Funding for the program is appropriated, on an annual basis, by Congress.

Prior to passage of the 1978 Agricultural Credit Act, emergency conservation measures were authorized by Public Law 85-58, the Third Supplemental Appropriation Act, enacted June 21, 1957.

The 1978 Act gives ECP continuing legislative status and provides new authorities, in addition to the assistance authorized under the earlier legislation.

Program Administration      Subject to the availability of funds, ASC county committees, in consultation with ASC State committees, are authorized to implement ECP for eligible farmers for all disasters except drought. When severe drought conditions exist, the determination to implement drought practices will be made by the Deputy Administrator, State and County Operations (DASCO), ASCS.

Cost-share levels up to 64 percent are set by county committees. Lower levels may be established by State and county committees.

Eligibility for ECP assistance is determined by county committees on an individual basis, taking into account the type and extent of damage. Individual or cumulative requests for cost-sharing of \$10,000 or less per person per disaster may be approved by county committees, and of \$20,000 or less by State committees after consulting with the ASCS Area Director. Cost-sharing over \$20,000 must be approved by DASCO. (A person is defined as an individual, group, partnership, corporation, or other legal entity owning or operating a farm or ranch.) Technical assistance is provided by the Soil Conservation Service.

Emergency  
Practices

Emergency practices to rehabilitate farmland damaged by wind erosion and other disasters, including drought, may include debris removal, providing water for livestock, fence restoration, grading and shaping of farmland, restoring structures, and water conservation measures. Other emergency conservation measures may be authorized by county committees with approvals by State committees and the Director, Conservation and Environmental Protection Division, ASCS, to develop a special practice needed to rehabilitate damaged farmland not covered by one of the approved practices.

Farmers or ranchers may enter into pooling agreements to jointly solve mutual conservation problems.

FORESTRY INCENTIVES PROGRAM

Program  
Objectives

The Forestry Incentives Program (FIP) aims to increase the Nation's supply of timber products from private non-industrial forest lands. The program encourages landowners to plant trees on suitable open lands or cutover areas, and to perform timber stand improvement work for production of timber and other related forest resources.

Private nonindustrial landowners control the majority of forest lands in the Nation, but these lands are not fully utilized. Many landowners do not have the funds to make long-term investments in developing and improving forest areas. FIP is designed to share this expense with private, eligible landowners.

Scope of  
Program

To meet program objectives and utilize funds cost-effectively, FIP is offered only in designated counties where a suitable number of ownerships capable of producing at least 50 cubic feet of timber per year are available. FIP agreements are limited to eligible ownerships of 10 to 1,000 acres. Landowners owning more than 1,000 but less than 5,000 acres may obtain an exception to this acreage limitation where the Secretary of Agriculture determines it is in the public interest.

Legislative  
Authority

FIP is authorized by the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 Public Law 95-313 (92 Stat. 367) 16 U.S.C. 2103 Section 4. Funds for the program are authorized annually by Congress.

Program  
Adminis-  
tration

FIP is reviewed annually at the national, State, and county levels by the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) in consultation with the Forest Service (FS) and a committee of at least five State foresters or equivalent State officials. The program is jointly administered by ASCS and FS in cooperation with State forestry agencies. Cost-share requests and payments are administered by ASCS county committees with technical forestry assistance provided by State forestry agencies.

Funds for cost-share use are allocated in each program year to ASCS State committees on the basis of a survey of total eligible private timber acreage and acreage potentially suitable for production of timber products.

The ASC State committee, in consultation with the State forester, develops a State FIP program that reflects the State's forestry needs, including a list of designated counties, eligible forestry practices, applicable cost-share rates, and the requirements, conditions, and specifications for the practices.

The State program is submitted to the national level for review and approval. Once the State program is approved, the State ASC committee allots the funds to the ASC county committees who use them to help landowners apply forestry practices on their land.

Landowner  
Agreements

Cost-share agreements between the landowner and the Secretary of Agriculture are based on forest management plans developed by the landowner in cooperation with and approved by the State forestry agency. Consideration is given to enhancing other related forest resources as well as cost-effective timber production.

Landowners apply for participation in the program at the county ASCS office which asks the State forestry agency to examine the property, help develop the Forest Management Plan, and certify the need for the proposed practice. The State forestry agency provides technical advice and will help locate approved vendors for getting the work accomplished. The State forestry agency must certify that the project has been completed satisfactorily in accordance with the approved plan before payment is made. The county ASCS office handles all payments earned under the program.

FIP assists in obtaining required technical service for forestry practices through special arrangements with the U.S. Forest Service and the State foresters.

Cost-sharing assistance cannot exceed 65 percent of the actual, average, or estimated cost of performing the practice, as determined jointly by the State Forester and the State and county ASC committees. In some States, assistance is available under long-term agreements of 3 to 10 years.

The maximum cost-share that a person can earn annually for forestry practices under FIP is \$10,000.



Eligible  
Practices

FP1. Planting Trees

This practice is intended to increase the production of timber and improve the environment. Site preparation is an authorized part of the practice if certified by the forester as being necessary. Information on eligible species and planting requirements is available from the State forestry agency or ASCS office in participating counties.

FP2. Improving a Stand of Forest Trees

This practice is aimed at increasing growth of trees on sites suitable for production of saw-timber and veneer logs. Both softwood and hardwood improvement practices qualify. Pre-commercial thinning, pruning of crop trees, and releasing desirable seedlings and young trees are acceptable measures.

FP3. Site Preparation for Natural Regeneration

This practice is intended to reduce or eliminate competing vegetation, including unmerchantable or undesirable trees and brush, and to create soil conditions suitable for the natural establishment of seedlings representing the desired tree species. An appropriate seed source must be in adequate supply before site preparation is performed.

WATER BANK PROGRAM

Purpose

The Water Bank Program (WBP) is designed to preserve and improve the major wetlands as habitat for migratory waterfowl and other wildlife; conserve surface waters; reduce runoff, soil, and wind erosion; contribute to flood control; improve water quality; improve subsurface moisture; and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape.

Legislative  
Authority

The program is authorized by the Water Bank Act (Public Law 91-559 [84 Stat. 1468, 16 U.S.C. 1301]) approved by Congress December 19, 1970, and the Water Bank Act Amendment (Public Law 96-182 [93 Stat. 1317, 16 U.S.C. 1304]) approved by Congress January 2, 1980.

Program  
Adminis-  
tration

ASC county committees administer the program with planning and technical services provided by the Soil Conservation Service.

Scope of  
Program

WBP operates primarily in the northern part of the Central flyway and the northern and southern part of the Mississippi River flyway, which are the major migratory water routes used by waterfowl. The program also operates along other flyways in the States where the program is authorized.



Program  
Provisions

WBP applies to wetlands identified in a conservation plan developed in cooperation with the Soil and Water Conservation District in which the lands are located and under terms and conditions set forth by the Secretary of Agriculture.

The term "wetlands" is defined as inland fresh areas (types one through seven) described in Circular 39, Wetlands of the United States, published by the U.S. Department of the Interior. This definition includes artificially developed inland fresh areas which meet this description.

The seven types are: seasonally flooded basins or flats, fresh meadows, shallow fresh marshes, deep fresh marshes, open fresh water, shrub swamps, and wooded swamps.

Other adjacent privately-owned land may be designated upon determination by county committees that this land is needed to protect the wetland or is essential for the nesting, breeding, or feeding of migratory waterfowl. The adjacent land may adjoin the wetland or be within one-quarter of a mile.

Eligible persons in selected areas having eligible wetlands in important migratory waterfowl nesting, breeding, or feeding areas enter into 10-year agreements, with provisions for renewal, and receive annual payments for the conservation of water and to meet other purposes of the Act.

All agreements are reviewed at the beginning of the fifth year of the contract, and payment rates may be adjusted to reflect current land and crop values.

Program  
Partici-  
pation

In entering into an agreement, the owner or operator agrees:

1. not to drain, burn, fill, or otherwise destroy the wetland character of areas placed under the agreement, nor to use such areas for agricultural purposes, as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture;
2. to carry out the wetland conservation and development plan for the land in accordance with the terms of the agreement;
3. not to adopt any practice specified by the Secretary as one that would tend to defeat the purposes of the agreement; and
4. to such additional provisions as the Secretary determines are desirable and included in the agreement to meet program purposes or to facilitate its administration.

## COLORADO RIVER SALINITY CONTROL PROGRAM

Purpose	The Colorado River carries approximately 9 million tons of salt annually past Hoover Dam. About half of the present salinity concentration in the river is attributed to natural sources. The remaining half results from human activity. The Colorado River Salinity Control (CRSC) Program provides financial and technical assistance to identify salt source areas in the Colorado River Basin; to install conservation practices and irrigation improvements to reduce salinity levels in the river; to carry out research, education, and demonstration projects, and monitoring and evaluation activities.
Legislative Authority	The CRSC program is authorized by Section 202(c) of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act, as amended (43 U.S.C. 1592).
Program Administration	The program is administered by the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) in cooperation with the Soil Conservation Service, Extension Service, Agricultural Research Service, Farmers Home Administration, Bureau of Reclamation, and Fish and Wildlife agencies.
Scope of Program	The CRSC program is available in the States of Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming. It applies to lands that are in an identified salt source area, privately-owned or controlled land, Indian tribal land, irrigation district or company land, and State and local government land.
Project Areas	The program operates in approved project areas. An eligible project area must be identified in a published USDA Salinity Control report and is considered approved for the program when a Project Implementation Plan has been funded based on the USDA Salinity Control Coordinating Committee's recommendation.
Program Participation	<p>Landowners or operators are eligible to participate in the CRSC program if all of the following apply:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Their lands or activities contribute to the project area's salt loading of the Colorado River.</li><li>2. Their lands or activities in a project area are designated as critical areas or salt sources.</li><li>3. The Conservation District approves the salinity control plan covering the critical areas and salt sources, and</li><li>4. The participant meets any minimum acreage eligibility requirements that county ASC committees may establish.</li></ol>
Typical Program Practices	<u>On-Farm Salt Load Reduction:</u> A practice to reduce salt contributions from irrigation systems by conserving or reducing deep percolation of water and controlling erosion, where soil erosion is contributing significantly to the salt loading of water.

Off-Farm Salt Load Reduction: This practice reduces salt contributions from irrigation canals and laterals by conserving and reducing seepage of water and controlling erosion where erosion of land is significantly contributing to salt loading of water.

Permanent Wildlife Habitat: To protect, restore, or develop permanent wildlife habitat cover or food.

Shallow Water Areas for Wildlife: A practice to develop or restore shallow water areas to replace wildlife resources.

Special Salinity Reduction Practices: Project areas may develop permanent salinity reduction and fish and wildlife practices needed to solve a unique local problem, which has been designated high priority in the Project Implementation Plan and for which national program practices are inadequate.

Cost-Sharing Assistance      Cost-share levels up to 70 percent of the total cost are authorized for CRSC projects. Levels exceeding the projected on-farm and offsite benefits must be approved by the ASCS Deputy Administrator for State and County Operations with concurrence from the USDA Salinity Control Coordinating Committee.

Eligible landowners and operators in approved project areas should apply for assistance at their local ASCS office. CRSC contracts run from 3 to 10 years.

#### RURAL CLEAN WATER PROGRAM

Purpose      The experimental Rural Clean Water Program (RCWP) provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural landowners and operators in 21 selected areas throughout the United States where practices specifically targeted to significant agriculture-related water pollution and water quality problems are needed.

Legislative Authority      RCWP is authorized by the Agriculture, Rural Development and Related Agencies Appropriation Acts of 1980 (P.L. 96-108) and 1981 (P.L. 96-528).

Program Administration      The program is administered by the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service in cooperation with soil conservation districts, State soil and water conservation or water quality agencies, Forest Service, Extension Service, and the Environmental Protection Agency. The Soil Conservation Service is responsible for coordinating technical assistance. National, State and local Rural Clean Water Coordinating Committees, representing agencies concerned with water quality, are responsible for assuring effective program coordination.



Water  
Quality  
Plans

To be eligible to participate, applicants must demonstrate a critical water quality problem and must have an approved water quality plan designed to treat the problem. The priority for developing water quality plans among applicants is determined by county ASC committees and Soil Conservation Districts based on criteria developed by local RCWP coordinating committees in consultation with State coordinating committees.

The water quality plan, developed with technical assistance and certification by SCS is approved by the Soil Conservation District. The plan must include appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs) for the treatment of all critical areas or sources of pollution within the project area, whether or not the practice is cost-shared or receives technical assistance.

BMPs are those practices which reduce pollutants entering a stream or lake or underground water or prevent pollutants from leaving their source. Practices must provide long-term community-wide benefits to be approved for assistance.

Eligibility

To participate in RCWP, a landowner or operator in the selected project areas enters into a contract to carry out the water quality plan. Eligibility is limited to privately-held agricultural lands, Indian tribal lands and land owned by irrigation districts.

All requests for RCWP contracts must be submitted to and approved by county ASC committees in the selected areas before cost-sharing payments will be provided for any practice. RCWP contracts run from 3 to 10 years, depending on the applicant's water quality plan. Contracts may be modified where there is a change in the status of the participant, the land under agreement, or farming operations. All cost-shared practices must be maintained for a minimum of five years after installation, or for the established life span of the contract if over five years, unless otherwise approved.

Cost-Sharing

The maximum federal cost-share level is 75 percent. There is no annual limitation, but total RCWP payments to a participant are limited to \$50,000.





